

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

EA Number: OR 128-02-03

BLM Coos Bay District Office

Lease/Serial/Case file No.: N/A

Proposed Action Title/Type: Request to amend a Reciprocal Right-Of-Way Agreement (RWA-C-625) to allow permittee to build a new road across an approved right-of-way.

Location of Proposed Action: Brownson Creek, T. 29 S., R. 11 W., Section 11, Will. Mer., Coos County, OR.

Applicant (if any): Lone Rock Timber Company

Conformance With Applicable Land Use Plan: This proposed action is subject to the *Coos Bay District Resource Management Plan & Environmental Impact Statement* and its Record of Decision (BLM, 1995); which is in conformance with the *Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement on Management of Habitat for Late Successional and Old Growth Forest Related Species Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl* and its Record of Decision (Interagency, 1994). This plan has been reviewed to determine if the proposed action conforms with the land use plan's terms and conditions as required by 43 CFR 1601.5.

Remarks: The Proposed Action is in compliance with the *Coos Bay District Resource Management Plan & Environmental Impact Statement* and its Record of Decision (BLM, 1995)RMP; hereby incorporated by reference. The RMP has been determined to be consistent with the standards and guidelines for healthy lands at the land use plan scale and associated time lines.

I. Purpose and Need for Proposed Action: The applicant has requested access to their land by way of constructing a portion of their proposed road across government land to facilitate the harvest of private timber.

II. Description of Alternatives, Including the Proposed Action:

No Action: Should the government deny the request, the applicant will probably modify their harvest plan and proceed as follows: They could log this portion of their timber downhill. This action would necessitate construction of a landing area adjacent to Big Creek County road with all loading and yarding activities within 35 feet of Big Creek. Denying this request would go against the policy of the Federal Government to provide reasonable access to private land owners across government lands.

Proposed Action: The applicant has requested to amend Reciprocal Right-Of-Way and Road Use Agreement C-625, to include the proposed right-of-way. This will assist the applicant to harvest their property in the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 14, T.29S., R.11W., Will. Mer., Coos County, Oregon. The purpose of this proposed action is to facilitate the applicant in logging approximately 20 acres of their land using best management harvesting methods. The age class of the timber to be harvested is a mixture of 30 year old hardwoods and scattered conifers. This action is primarily a stand conversion to establish a more merchantable species of timber on the site. The harvest is planned to be accomplished with a skyline system capable of at least one-end suspension. In addition, upon completion of the harvest, they plan on decommissioning the access road by heavily water barring the out-sloped road. Seeding, fertilizing, and mulching the running surface, as well as blocking the access point of the road to vehicle traffic, and reforesting the road prism would be accomplished.

The following design features would be implemented under the Proposed Action:

- ◆ The permittee shall wash all logging equipment and vehicles prior to initial entry to help prevent the spread of noxious weeds and Port Orford Cedar root rot disease.
- ◆ All waterbars will be constructed with open outlets capable of dispersing water over the hillside at a spacing of between 100 and 70 feet between bars.
- ◆ Closure of the road would be accomplished through the placement of large rock or digging a trench across the width of the road, at the Big Creek County junction, sufficient to prevent vehicle access to the road.

III. Environmental Consequences:**Environmental Impacts to Critical Elements of the Human Environment for the No Action alternative:**

Critical Elements	Affected		Critical Elements	Affected	
	Yes	No		Yes	No
Air Quality	—	<u>X</u>	T & E Species	—	<u>X</u>
ACECs	—	<u>X</u>	S & M Botany	—	<u>X</u>
Cultural Resources	—	<u>X</u>	S & M Mollosk	—	<u>X</u>
Environmental Justice Concerns	—	<u>X</u>	Wastes, Hazardous/Solid	—	<u>X</u>
Farmlands, Prime/Unique	—	<u>X</u>	Water Quality	—	<u>X</u>
Floodplains	—	<u>X</u>	Wetlands/Riparian Zones	—	<u>X</u>
Native American Religious Concerns	—	<u>X</u>	Wild & Scenic Rivers	—	<u>X</u>
Noxious Weed Management	—	<u>X</u>	Wilderness	—	<u>X</u>
Port Orford Cedar Management	—	<u>X</u>			

Description of additional impacts under the No Action alternative:

Soils: If the No Action alternative is selected, no change to the current existing conditions on BLM managed lands would occur. Sediment sources would most likely be developed from downhill yarding corridors on private lands converging on landings at the bottom of the slope. Future sediment delivery from streams and yarding corridors could transpire over a longer time period from a hillside harvested with downhill methods versus uphill methods. Less control of the logs is available in the downward direction making yarding corridors wider and deeper. Landing and yarding activities could potentially produce sediment and drainage onto the County road that could reach Big Creek.

Hydrology/Water Quality: Denying an amendment to the reciprocal R/W (No Action) would require downhill logging closer to Big Creek. Some sediment could reach Big Creek with downhill logging, depending on timing and nature of activity.

Harvesting the unit may change the baseline for hydrologic maturity very slightly and is not significant. There should be no appreciable change in the nature or distribution of peak or base flows. The unit areas are below the rain on snow elevation.

The following minimum best management practices should be completed concurrent with or in addition to normal Oregon Department of Forestry stipulations recommended by the Operations Forester:

- A. Restrict active yarding and hauling operations to the drier portions of the year (May-October) if possible, to reduce potential for offsite soil movement and sediment delivery to road ditches and streams.
- B. Stormproof any new road construction or area disturbance that could contribute sediment to stream channels or road or ditch lines the same season of disturbance. This should be accomplished by using a suitable seed mixture for erosion control, fertilizer and a mulch rate using wood fiber or straw at no less than 2500 lbs./acre.

Wildlife, Including T & E and S&M Species: An office review of the current data on Marbled Murrelet and Northern Spotted Owl locations/habitats was conducted. No locations or suitable habitat were identified; therefore, this proposal is not expected to remove, or disturb any federally listed wildlife species protected by the Endangered Species Act, or any other special status wildlife species. This proposal is not expected to affect any survey and manage wildlife species identified in the Northwest Forest Plan or the Coos Bay Resource Management Plan. The length of road and construction standards are of interest from a watershed stand point. Since the road is expected to be constructed to minimum standards some of these impacts should be mitigated. However, since closure of the road is unspecified under the No Action alternative, there could be an increase in the number of miles of road per section per watershed.

Aquatic Habitat/Fisheries /Riparian Zones Including T & E and S&M Species: Under the No Action alternative, no construction would occur on BLM administered lands; therefore, no impacts would be expected to these lands. However, the subsequent down-hill scenario that is likely to occur under the No Action alternative could cause vegetation to be altered along various waterways thus impacting water quality and/or quantity. There could be some sediment delivery to Big Creek and some altering of in-channel habitat. See Soils comments above.

Vegetation, Including T & E and S & M Species: No populations or potential habitat for T & E or S & M plant species have been identified in the vicinity of this project; therefore, no impacts are expected to occur.

Port-Orford Cedar and Noxious Weed Species: While no populations of noxious weeds or Port-Orford cedar, or POC disease pockets have been identified, in order to help prevent the spread of noxious weeds and/or Port Orford Cedar root rot disease, the permittee should wash all logging equipment and log trucks prior to initial entry into the project area.

Cultural Resources: The lack of known cultural resources, steeply sloped ground and recent disturbance associated with regeneration timber harvest strongly indicates intact cultural resources will not be affected by this project (either the road construction or subsequent timber stand conversion). However, if any other potential cultural resources are encountered during this project, all work in the vicinity should stop and the District Archaeologist must be notified at once.

Hazardous Materials / Solid Wastes: Provisions for Oil Spill Prevention, Control and Counter measures (SPCC) under Oregon Administrative Rule No. OAR 340-108 apply to the use of any equipment using petroleum. In addition, Oregon Forest Practices Act Section No. OAR 629-57-3600, Petroleum Product Precautions, will be in effect. An oil spill containment kit should be on site during operations, and at least one employee shall be familiar with it's use. Any reportable quantity release (see OAR 340-108) shall also be reported to the BLM representative noted in the agreement.

Environmental Impacts to Critical Elements of the Human Environment for the Proposed Action alternative:

Critical Elements	Affected	Critical Elements	Affected
Air Quality	— <u>X</u>	T & E Species	— <u>X</u>
ACECs	— <u>X</u>	S & M Botany	— <u>X</u>
Cultural Resources	— <u>X</u>	S & M Mollosk	— <u>X</u>
Environmental Justice Concerns	— <u>X</u>	Wastes, Hazardous/Solid	— <u>X</u>
Farmlands, Prime/Unique	— <u>X</u>	Water Quality	— <u>X</u>
Floodplains	— <u>X</u>	Wetlands/Riparian Zones	— <u>X</u>
Native American Religious Concerns	— <u>X</u>	Wild & Scenic Rivers	— <u>X</u>
Noxious Weed Management	— <u>X</u>	Wilderness	— <u>X</u>
Port Orford Cedar Management	— <u>X</u>		

Description of additional impacts under the Proposed Action alternative:

Soils: The proposed construction crosses BLM managed lands in section 14 on a Preacher-Blachly (44E) soil type. The sideslopes are closer to a 30 to 60% classification than the 60 to 90% for the Preacher-Bohannon loam (46F) just downslope. Either soil type has the potential to produce sediment as the erosion hazard is high. The high clay contents of the soils limit infiltration and have the potential to compact and cause rutting when overly wet. These soils have the potential to produce good levels of merchantable timber in a 50 year rotation.

If the Proposed Action is followed during the construction, use, and decommissioning of this road, there should be little to no sediment delivered to the stream network of the area. The topography is gentle enough that the road work required could be accomplished with cut and fill construction techniques. The installation of waterbars and replanting of the surface should reduce the available water on the road surface and minimize erosion. Both practices of outsloping and waterbarring reduce concentrated flows and the combination of both will more than adequately protect the nearby streams from receiving sediment from the road surface. Closure of the renovated road at the junction with the County road will prevent the structures from deteriorating and reducing their effectiveness.

Hydrology/Water Quality: No impacts are expected to the BLM managed portion of the action if standard Best Management Practices for maintaining water quality and soil productivity are followed.

The unit would be uphill logged under the current proposal. Very little sediment is expected to reach Big Creek with uphill logging, depending on timing and nature of activity.

Harvesting the unit may change the baseline for hydrologic maturity very slightly and is not significant. There should be no appreciable change in the nature or distribution of peak or base flows. The unit areas are below the rain on snow elevation.

No mitigation is needed or recommended beyond the design features described in the Proposed Action.

Wildlife, Including T & E and S&M Species: An office review of the current data on Marbled Murrelet and Northern Spotted Owl locations/habitats was conducted. No locations or suitable habitat were identified. This proposal is not expected to remove, or disturb any federally listed wildlife species protected by the Endangered Species Act, or any other special status wildlife species. This proposal is not expected to affect any survey and manage wildlife species identified in the Northwest Forest Plan or the Coos Bay Resource Management Plan. The length of road and construction standards are of interest from a watershed stand point. Since the road is expected to be constructed to minimum standards and closed after use, these impacts should be mitigated by not increasing the number of miles of road per section per watershed.

Aquatic Habitat/Fisheries /Riparian Zones Including T & E and S&M Species: Water Quality/Quantity: The proposed construction of the road on BLM is upper slope and would be constructed above the headwaters of the two ephemeral drainages in the area. No vegetation within these drainages would be altered in the course of the road construction on BLM-managed lands, therefore, no change in water quality or quantity is likely as a result.

Substrate: There would be an unlikely chance of sediment delivery to Big Creek since the proposed road to be constructed on BLM-managed land skirts above the headwalls of two drainages. The road will also be utilized for a short period of time and then blocked, seeded, mulched and reforested. The drainages are ephemeral and according to historic aerial photography, there were no obvious indicators of slope instability. The trees to be removed in the course of road construction on BLM-managed lands are ten years of age, therefore, removal of enough of these trees to open a road prism that is 597 feet on BLM will not likely change the potential for future large woody debris. The drainages are not well established, are vegetated, and are likely ephemeral; therefore, they would not be fish-bearing and hence, this proposed road construction on BLM-managed land will not alter any in-channel habitat.

This project (construction of 597 feet of road on BLM-managed lands) is determined to not adversely affect coho and/or chinook salmon Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) in this drainage. EFH is defined as “those waters and substrate necessary to fish for spawning, breeding, feeding, or growth to maturity. This finding is based on an analysis indicating that the project will not create impacts which either directly or indirectly reduce the quality or quantity of EFH for these species. Effects of the action on relevant indicators for water and substrates needed for spawning, breeding, feeding, or growth to maturity have been evaluated and have been determined to be below the threshold and does not require EFH consultation with NMFS.

Vegetation, Including T & E and S & M Species: The timber along the construction route on BLM-administered lands is about 12 years old and is predominately Douglas-fir. No populations or potential habitat for T & E or S & M plant species have been identified in the vicinity of this project; therefore, no impacts are expected to occur.

Port-Orford Cedar and Noxious Weed Species: While no populations of noxious weeds or Port-Orford cedar, or POC disease pockets have been identified, in order to help prevent the spread of noxious weeds and/or Port Orford Cedar root rot disease, the permittee should wash all logging equipment and log trucks prior to initial entry into the project area.

Cultural Resources: The lack of known cultural resources, steeply sloped ground and recent disturbance associated with regeneration timber harvest strongly indicates intact cultural resources will not be affected by this project (either the road construction or subsequent timber stand conversion). However, if any other potential cultural resources are encountered during this project, all work in the vicinity should stop and the District Archaeologist must be notified at once.

Hazardous Materials / Solid Wastes: Provisions for Oil Spill Prevention, Control and Counter measures (SPCC) under Oregon Administrative Rule No. OAR 340-108 apply to the use of any equipment using petroleum. In addition, Oregon Forest Practices Act Section No. OAR 629-57-3600, Petroleum Product Precautions, will be in effect. An oil spill containment kit should be on site during operations, and at least one employee shall be familiar with its use. Any reportable quantity release (see OAR 340-108) shall also be reported to the BLM representative noted in the agreement.

Description of Mitigation Measures and Residual Impacts:

To help prevent the spread of noxious weeds and Port Orford cedar root rot disease the permittee shall wash all trucks and logging equipment prior to initial entry.

IV. Persons/Agencies Consulted:

Lone Rock Timber Co., Ken Hoffine

Engineer and Surveyor

<u>Preparers</u>	<u>Initials</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Speciality</u>
Joel Robb	_____	_____	Myrtlewood Road Manager, Team Lead
Dale Stewart	_____	_____	Soil Scientist
Dan Carpenter	_____	_____	Hydrologist
Pam Olson	_____	_____	Fisheries Biologist
Stephen Langenstein	_____	_____	Wildlife Biologist
Nancy Brian	_____	_____	District Botanist
Bob Raper	_____	_____	District Noxious Weed Coordinator
Stephen Samuels	_____	_____	District Archaeologist
Tim Votaw	_____	_____	Hazardous Material Specialist
Jim Kowalick	_____	_____	Port Orford Cedar Coordinator

Date: December 13, 2001

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FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT/DECISION RECORD.

I have reviewed this environmental assessment including the explanation and resolution of any potentially significant environmental impacts. I have determined that the proposed action with the mitigation measures described below will not have any significant impacts on the human environment and that an EIS is not required.. I have determined that the proposed project is in conformance with the approved land use plan. It is my decision to implement the project as described in the Description of the Proposed Action section with the mitigation measures identified below.

Mitigation Measures: The permittee shall wash all trucks and logging equipment prior to initial entry to help prevent the spread of noxious weeds and Port Orford cedar root rot disease.

Decision recommended by: NRSA: _____ Date: _____

NRSA: _____ Date: _____

NRSA: _____ Date: _____

Decision Approved by: Myrtlewood Field Manager: _____ Date: _____